

## DHHL stands by its record

By Micah A. Kane

*Editor's note: Micah Kane is chairman of the Hawaiian Homes Commission and director of the state Department of Hawaiian Home Lands. The views expressed in this community forum are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.*

On Sept. 2 and 3, *The Honolulu Advertiser* ran two front-page stories critical of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL). The articles, written by Jim Dooley, contain several inaccurate and misleading statements.

Mr. Dooley's assertion that DHHL contracts were awarded due to political reasons is false. We have awarded contracts based on expected performance, and that is made clear to all we do business with.

Mr. Dooley's articles inferred that the selection committee members were not qualified. This is also false. They are qualified, and just as we expect performance from the businesses with whom we contract, we expect performance from the people we hire.

The allegations of procurement violations were brought by Mr. Dooley after he proposed an incorrect hypothetical scenario to the State Procurement Officer, Aaron Fujioka. After we provided Mr. Fujioka with corrected and additional information, he stated the hypothetical situation he responded to did not match the scenario presented in Mr. Dooley's article.

In addition, Mr. Fujioka stated, "Based on the information reviewed, SPO (State Procurement Office) concurs with and confirms that (the contractor) selection complies with the procurement code."

Mr. Fujioka also, at our request, suggested additional procedures we can incorporate

into our procurement process to further alleviate the perception of impropriety. The additional procedures suggested by Mr. Fujioka have already been incorporated in our process.

Further, the article refers to the term "non-bid" without clarifying that non-bid does not mean non-competitive. As required by the state procurement code, under a non-bid award, at least three companies are selected from a pre-qualified list and then competitively compared to pro-



DHHL's 326-unit Koupe 'o project in Kapolei is nearly half-filled with native Hawaiian families. - Photo: Courtesy of DHHL

duce a most-qualified selection with the supporting justification. This procedure was followed by DHHL.

The articles attempt to isolate the historical challenges of a specific project, Kēōkea-Waiohuli, as though they are still common practice for the department. Previous administrations were unable to find a way to feasibly proceed with the Kēōkea agricultural subdivision promised to beneficiaries more than 20 years ago. That changed with a stable source of funding to DHHL by the state Legislature and a fresh perspective brought by the Lingle-Aiona administration and Community Planning & Engineering, Inc.

The Kēōkea-Waiohuli project is expensive in large part

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